

Grant of Franchise to Lessees of Stake-nets and China-nets.

107. MR. K. SIVARAMA PANIKKAR (*Shertallai*): Will the Government be pleased to state:

(a) whether the fixed engines such as stake-nets and China-nets are assessed;

(b) the amount of annual revenue received from this source;

(c) the number of owners of such nets paying an annual rent of Rs. 5 or more;

(d) why they are not included in the voters' list;

(e) whether they have received representations from the Valans to say that qualified net-owners should be enlisted as voters, and, if so, the action taken thereon; and

(f) whether they will declare qualified net-owners eligible for voting?

MR. T. P. RAMASUBBA AIYAR (*Secretary to Government*): (a) The answer is in the affirmative.

(b) The revenue from the fixed engines in 1101 was Rs. 6,138-24-0.

(c) 200.

(d) They are not eligible for voting under the Legislative Council Electoral Rules in force.

(e) Yes. In G. O., D. Dis. No. 43 of 1925/Legis., dated the 26th January 1925, the President, Municipal Council, Parur, who had raised the question, was informed that, as the Revised Electoral Rules had already been issued and as the Electoral Rolls were already in the Press, it could not be considered then.

(f) The question will be considered when the Legislative Council Electoral Rules are next revised.

Police at Arukutti and Alleged Conversion of Mahomedans to Christianity.

108. MR. P. HABEEB MAHOMED (*Nominated*): Will the Government be pleased to state:

(a) whether they have received any representation or petition from any Muslim public body or copy of resolution passed by any Muslim association regarding the conduct of the Arukutti police in regard to the alleged forcible conversion of certain Mahomedans to Christianity; and

(b) if so, whether they have enquired into the matter?

MR. K. GEORGE (*Chief Secretary to Government*): (a) The answer is in the affirmative.

(b) Yes. A copy * of the report of the joint enquiry by the Ag. Commissioner of Police and the District Magistrate, Kottayam, is laid on the table.

MR. P. HABEEB MAHOMED (*Nominated*): With regard to the appendix, page 345, may I know the address of the person to whom the letter, said to have been sent by Mr. Habeeb, was sent?

* *Vide* Appendix V—page 345.

MR. K. GEORGE (*Chief Secretary to Government*): I cannot say.

MR. P. HABEEB MAHOMED (*Nominated*): Will the Government kindly call for the information in regard to that matter?

MR. K. GEORGE (*Chief Secretary to Government*): Yes, if the member considers it so important.

MR. P. HABEEB MAHOMED (*Nominated*): May I inform the Government that that statement in the appendix is highly objectionable since it is false?

MR. K. GEORGE (*Chief Secretary to Government*): It has been published since it formed part of the report submitted by the Police Commissioner.

MR. P. HABEEB MAHOMED (*Nominated*): Will the Government kindly ask the police officers who made the investigation to substantiate that statement?

MR. K. GEORGE (*Chief Secretary to Government*): The Government will ask the Police Commissioner to investigate the question and make a report.

MR. P. HABEEB MAHOMED (*Nominated*): May I know the places where the several protest meetings were held?

MR. K. GEORGE (*Chief Secretary to Government*): The information is not now available.

MR. P. HABEEB MAHOMED (*Nominated*): Only three places have been mentioned in the report. May I know whether meetings were held in any other place?

MR. K. GEORGE (*Chief Secretary to Government*): The information is not here. If the member desires, the Government will call for the information.

Filling of a Clerk's Post in the Trivandrum Village Panchayat Court.

109. MR. P. HABEEB MAHOMED (*Nominated*): Will the Government be pleased to state:

(a) the number of qualified Mahomedans who applied for a clerk's post in the Village Panchayat Court, Trivandrum, in the year 1102;

(b) whether it is a fact that the candidate chosen for filling one of the vacancies which arose very recently is a nephew of the President of the Village Panchayat Court; and

(c) what his qualifications are and whether he has been in Travancore service on any previous occasion?

MR. K. GEORGE (*Chief Secretary to Government*): (a) None.

(b) The answer is in the affirmative.

(c) He is a S. S. L. C. holder, eligible for admission to colleges, with a fair knowledge of shorthand and typewriting. He was acting as a clerk in the Village Panchayat and Bench Magistrates' Court, Trivandrum.

Appendix V.

Vide Answer to Question No. 108.

R. O. C. No. 538/Genl. of 26.

Kottayam,
29-10-1926.

From

M. R. Ry. R. K. Krishna Pillai Avl., B. A.,
Ag. Commissioner of Police,
Travancore, and
M. R. Ry. R. Krishna Pillai Avl., B. A., B. L.,
District Magistrate,
Kottayam.

To

The Chief Secretary to Government.

Sir,

With reference to your R. O. C. No. 1526/26, Judicial, dated 9th September 1926, re forcible reconversion of certain Muslims at Arukutti, we have the honour to inform you that we went to Arukutti and made a joint enquiry into the allegations made against the Police.

The facts of the case brought to light in our enquiry are as follows:

One Agasty, a Christian of Ernakulam, established himself at Arukutti and was working as a barber there. Near his shop was the house of Karumby, the Vala woman, who is also alleged to have been reconverted. This woman was living in her husband's house. When she became pregnant, she came to her mother's house close to the shop of Agasty. Agasty took a fancy for Karumby and sought the help of his friend Kunjan Marakkar, a rowdy of the place, to secure his object. As a result of this man's machinations and pressure, Agasty and Karumby were made to put on the dress of Mahomedans and induced to live together in one of the houses of Kunjan Marakkar. Beyond this change of dress, no further steps seem to have been taken to complete the conversion into Mahomedanism, such as circumcision of the man and boring of the ear of the woman. While they were thus living together, there was an assault on the Police in Kumbham 1100 in Kattupuram Mosque, in which Kunjan Marakkar and his associates are said to have taken part. A case was registered by the Police and Kunjan Marakkar left the place to avoid arrest by the Police. From the statement of the witnesses examined by us, we have reason to suspect that the Police called Agasty to the Station and questioned him about the whereabouts of his friend Kunjan Marakkar and even put some pressure on him to get the required information. It is also probable that Agasty feared his own arrest in connection with the case of assault on the Police. Agasty also therefore left Arukutti leaving Karumby alone. Karumby was being supported by Agasty and his friend Kunjan Marakkar; and when these two persons left the place, she returned to her mother's house and discarded her Mahomedan clothes. Some of the Mahomedan friends of Kunjan Marakkar did

not allow her to live in peace in her mother's house. The trouble from the Mahomedans becoming intolerable, Karumby went away to Ernakulam with her father and mother and lived there in the house of her father's sister. While they were there, their caste people raised the question of admitting her back to their fold and the matter was referred to Mr. K. P. Karuppan, a prominent member of their community and a member of the Cochin Legislative Council. As his evidence was found to be necessary in the case, we went to Ernakulam and got his statement also. Mr. Karuppan not only advised them to take her back, but also gave some letters to the prominent members of the Valan community to admit her to their community. One of such letters of Mr. Karuppan produced by Karumby is enclosed. Some-time after this, Mr. K. V. Kadir Kutty, the Ernakulam correspondent of the paper *Al Amin* of Calicut, with one or two other Mahomedans, went to Mr. Karuppan, taking with them Karumby and her parents, some Valans of the locality and also Agasty. Agasty and Karumby were then in their Christian and Vala dress respectively and not in Mahomedan clothes. Mr. Kadir Kutty wanted a statement from Karumby regarding her reconversion. Mr. Karuppan permitted a statement being taken. In answer to the question put by Mr. Kadir Kutty whether it was not as a result of Police pressure that she went back to Hinduism, she said that there was no pressure from the Police and that she went back of her own accord. Agasty, however, is reported to have said that he was forced to go back to Christianity by the Police. These statements were reduced to writing and signed by Agasty and Karumby and given to Mr. Kadir Kutty. They have not, however, seen the light of day, probably because they did not fit in with the theory which Mr. Kadir Kutty and his paper wanted to establish. After this, Karumby returned to Arukutty and is now living with her parents, while the whereabouts of Agasty are not known.

We have taken statements from Karumby, Kandan Aiyappan, a boy who was living with Karumby and Agasty, Kunjan Marakkar, Mr. K. P. Karuppan and also from four of the leading Mahomedans of Arukutti, Mahomed Meetian Mooppen, Parced Kosani, Mahomed Makkar Haji and Kunju Naina Mahomed and these statements are also enclosed.

The case against Kunjan Marakkar has been charged by the Police before the Kottayam Division First Class Magistrate and it has not yet been disposed of. Mr. Karuppan stated that Agasty gave a statement before Mr. Kadir Kutty, a correspondent of the paper *Al Amin* that the Police forced him to go back to the Christian religion. Agasty is a grown-up man. If the Police forced him to go back to the Christian religion, he could have become a Mahomedan again when he was not under their influence. Further, the Police Inspector Mr. Ramaswami Aiyar is a Hindu and he can have no interest in a Mahomedan becoming a Christian. We find from our enquiry that the allegations against the Police were made by or at the instigation of

Kunjan Marakkar who bore a grudge towards the Police for taking up a case against him. Agasty is an associate of Kunjan Marakkar and he also absconded fearing arrest by the Police. We believe that Agasty made the statement before Mr. Kadir Kutty at the instance of Kunjan Marakkar and that there is absolutely no truth in the allegation that the Police coerced Agasty to become a Christian. No one has come forward to substantiate the allegation that the Police induced Karumby to give up Mahomedanism. She says that she did so of her own free will. Mr. Karuppan's statement fully corroborates the same. There is therefore no truth in that allegation also.

Another point that deserves notice in this connection is the fact that it was the Mahomedans of Calicut, Trivandrum and Alwaye that passed resolutions to protest against the so-called forcible reconversion and that the Mahomedans of Arukutti refused to take any part in the agitation in spite of the fact that Mr. Habeeb, Member of the Travancore Legislative Council, sent a letter to the Mahomedans of Arukutti requesting them to hold a meeting and pass a resolution to the effect that the Police forcibly induced Agasty and Karumby to give up the Mahomedan religion, and the agents of the paper *Al Amin* came to Arukutti and tried their best to get it done.

We have stated that the ball was set in motion by Kunjan Marakkar as a result of his enmity towards the Police. There is another circumstance which forced the mischief makers to persist in their agitation. Soon after the paper *Al Amin* published the article, Mr. Pitt caused some enquiries to be made about it and finding that the report was false, wrote to the editor that action will be taken against the paper if the report is not contradicted. This circumstance appears to have driven the editor to set up an unnecessary agitation alleging that the facts stated by him are true.

From the enquiries made by us, we feel convinced that Agasty and Karumby gave up Mahomedanism of their free will and that the Police had absolutely nothing to do in the matter.

We have etc.,

R. K. KRISHNA PILLAI,

Ag. Commissioner of Police, Travancore.

R. KRISHNA PILLAI,

District Magistrate, Kottayam.